

merits and demerits of capital punishment as a penalty prescribed by society. As a self-governing people, do we thus create a culture in which killing is acceptable punishment for wrongdoing? Do we plant the seed of logic for independent action by the self-appointed judge and executioner, when taking of human life is considered responsibly-arrived-at decision in the criminal law? Especially with statistical studies failing to establish capital punishment as a deterrent to capital crimes, is the policy of destroying life, in the name of justice, a proper one for civilized society?

We amass national resources of money, skills, public opinion and manpower to compete with foreign and abhorrent ideologies. With these resources we also challenge and overcome the mysteries of outer space.

There is perhaps a greater and more important challenge presented in stark reality by the tragic recent events in Dallas; that we must dedicate more of our resources to the task of closing the gap between philosophy and fact in the rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" - to make equal justice under law prevail.

Many of the ingredients of this challenge are now discouraging or disillusioning to those who seek to make democracy work:

widespread demand for increased government services accompanied by clamor against the cost, the scramble to pluck fruits from the tree of democ-

easy while evading responsibility for
nourishing its roots;

corrupting pressures on government
officials and agencies for special
privileges;

lack of individual and group indigna-
tion in reaction to corrupt practices
in government, business and orga-
nized labor;

spreading trend of court decisions to
impose excessive restraints on police
in dealing with serious crimes, as in
the "exclusionary rule" which pro-
hibits seizure of evidence of a crime
if a warrant fails to anticipate such
evidence will be found, or the Mallory
rule which ignores the difficulties of
investigation as it clamps a too-tight
lid on confessions;

the growing tide of crime in the U.S.,
with inattention to the needs of law
enforcement agencies, which almost
everywhere are undermanned, under-
equipped and underpaid;

the arrogant posture of organized crime
and racketeering in the American scene,
met with timid and inadequate legis-
lation at the national level, largely
ignored at state and local lawmaking
levels;

the crime-deterrent value, and de-
cency, of "speedy justice", too often
lost in technical or unjustified post-
ponements of trials;

judges more concerned with partisan
politics than with impartial justice;

unprofessional parole and pardon pro-
cedures which return unreformed crim-
inals to destructive careers;

prisons unequipped to accomplish
their assigned task;

communities unready to help ex-convicts
find their way in useful society.

These and many more are gaps to be filled to advance law and order, and to stimulate "government of laws, not of men" as our way of life, bringing vital reality to the inscription on the courthouse facade.

On November 22nd our President, John F. Kennedy, and police officer J. D. Tippitt were both engaged in performance of their duties when fatally struck down by an assassin. The living, in the future performance of citizen and official duties, will determine whether national mourning is shortlived sentiment, or the beginning of dedication to correcting those conditions which mold the atmosphere of evaded responsibility in which these heinous crimes occurred.

THE END
or
THE BEGINNING?